

PUBLIC SMOKING AND HEALTH

CLAIM: SMOKING SHOULD BE BANNED IN PUBLIC PLACES BECAUSE TOBACCO SMOKE CAUSES DISEASE IN NONSMOKERS.

RESPONSES:

- This assertion has not been convincingly demonstrated in the scientific literature. Much of the limited available research that has been used to promote smoking bans has been criticized by independent scientists and at international conferences. (1,5,6,10)
- The scientific literature frequently stresses that the data on ETS exposure and disease in nonsmokers are inconsistent and inconclusive and that much more research needs to be done. (1-7) It is not surprising then, that the co-organizer of a recent international conference on this subject in Montreal, Canada, remarked that "it appears premature to take any sort of regulatory action" on this issue at this point. (1)
- A participant at another recent international forum on indoor air quality concluded: "Whether a real risk [from exposure to tobacco smoke] is involved which in the future can be demonstrated on the basis of measurable

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results remains an open question. In light of this, health officials should concentrate on more significant environmental problems in the long term interest of society rather than wasting time and money on trivial issues."(5)

- Thirty-four epidemiologic studies have examined the possible association between exposure to spousal smoking and lung cancer in nonsmokers. Only six of those studies report statistically significant associations; the great majority do not report even a statistically significant association between exposure to tobacco smoke and lung cancer in nonsmokers.(2,8)
- Many of the studies on tobacco smoke exposure and lung cancer in nonsmokers, including those that report a statistical association, are of questionable reliability because they failed to adequately consider other potential factors reported to be associated with disease such as diet, occupational exposures and heredity. Recent studies have reported that these factors are associated with lung cancer in nonsmokers.(9)
- Although some people have suggested that exposure to tobacco smoke may increase the risk of cardiovascular

disease in nonsmokers, scientists continue to question what role, if any, tobacco smoke constituents have in the possible development of heart disease.(3,10) Even the 1986 U.S. Surgeon General's Report, which focused exclusively on exposure to tobacco smoke and disease in nonsmokers, conceded that further studies were needed "in order to determine whether involuntary smoking increases the risk of cardiovascular disease."(11)

- Available data relating other respiratory diseases in adults and tobacco smoke exposure are weak -- no relationship has been conclusively demonstrated.(4)

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